

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 PM-03 INR-05 NSC-05 NSCE-00

CIAE-00 SP-02 PRS-01 DODE-00 L-01 USIA-01 SAJ-01 /048 W

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R 020630Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2051

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL MANDALAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2665

LIMDIS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XC, CH, UR

SUBJ: THE SRV (AND SOVIET?) "SMILE CAMPAIGN" IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA AND THE PRC

REF: RANGOON 2654, RANGOON 2391

1. ON JULY 30 I CALLED ON PRC AMBASSADOR YEH CHENG-CHANG AT
THE PRC EMBASSY REGARDING ANOTHER MATTER (SEPTTEL). TOWARD
THE END OF MY CALL, I ASKED YEH IF HE HAD ANY NEWS ABOUT THE
VISIT BY SRV DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PHAN HIEN. RATHER
PLAINTIVELY, HE REPLIED THAT NEITHER THE VIETNAMESE NOR
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THE BURMESE HAD YET TOLD HIM ANYTHING ABOUT THE VISIT.

"ALL I GOT WAS A TRIP TO THE AIRPORT," HE SAID. HE ASKED IF I HAD HEARD ANYTHING.

2. I TOLD YEH THAT MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL MAUNG MAUNG GYEE REGARDED THE VISIT AS A SUCCESSFUL ONE. THE BURMESE WERE IMPRESSED BY PHAN HIEN'S BROAD AND MODERATE VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. PERHAPS, I SUGGESTED, THE BURMESE WERE BEGINNING TO HOPE THAT VIETNAM MIGHT BECOME A MODERATE FORCE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, INSTEAD OF A TROUBLEMAKER. WHILE WE OURSELVES WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE A MODERATE AND WELL-BEHAVED VIETNAM IN SEA (IF THAT TURNED OUT TO BE POSSIBLE), I SUGGESTED THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT ALSO HOPE TO PROFIT FROM THE EMERGENCE OF A RELATIVELY POPULAR AND INFLUENTIAL SRV, WHICH THE SOVIET MIGHT VIEW AS A FORCE FOR "CONTAINING" CHINESE INFLUENCE. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I SAID THE CHINESE MIGHT BE UNWITTINGLY HELPING THE SOVIETS.

3. AMBASSADOR YEH EXPRESSED SOME PUZZLEMENT, BUT NO ANGER, SO I EXPLAINED THAT IF THE SRV WAS TO HAVE ANY SUCCESS IN REPRESENTING ITSELF (OR BEING SO REPRESENTED BY THE SOVIETS) AS A BULWARK AGAINST CHINA, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE BECAUSE THE CHINESE THEMSELVES HAD NOT TAKEN ANY EFFECTIVE STEPS TO DISPEL THE SOUTHEAST ASIANS' APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CHINESE INTENTIONS.

4. YEH SAID THAT ANY FEARS THE SOUTHEAST ASIANS MIGHT HAVE ABOUT CHINESE INTENTIONS WERE BASELESS, AND RESULTED FROM THE "SLANDEROUS RUMORS" SPREAD BY THE SOVIET UNION. I OF COURSE POINTED OUT THAT THE REASON WHY SUCH SLANDEROUS RUMORS HAD ANY CHANCE OF BEING BELIEVED BY THE SOUTHEAST ASIANS WAS THAT THE CHINESE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT INSURGENCIES AGAINST THE LEGAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA, AND FAILED TO REMOVE THE WORRIES WHICH SUCH ACTIONS CAUSED.

5. YEH REPEATED THAT THE SOUTHEAST ASIANS' WORRIES WERE CAUSED BY THE SOVIETS' "SLANDEROUS RUMORS," WHOSE FALSITY WOULD ONE DAY BE EXPOSED. COMMENT:
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YEH WAS CLEARLY BRINGING THE INTERVIEW TO A CLOSE, AND I LEFT AFTER A LITTLE DESULTORY CONVERSATION. HOWEVER, IT WAS ALSO CLEAR THAT YEH HAD TAKEN MY POINT, AND HAD NOT TAKEN OFFENSE. YEH HAS HEARD FROM OTHER AMBASSADORS IN THE RANGOON CORPS SIMILAR CRITICISMS OF PRC SUPPORT OF INSURGENCIES, AND YEH MAY AGREE WITH US IN HIS HEART, IF AMBASSADOR KAISER, OUR FORMER BAGLADESH COLLEAGUE, IS RIGHT IN

IDENTIFYING YEH AS A LONGTIME ADHERENT OF CHOU EN-LAI.
OSBORN

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